News release

Return of summer extends dry spell

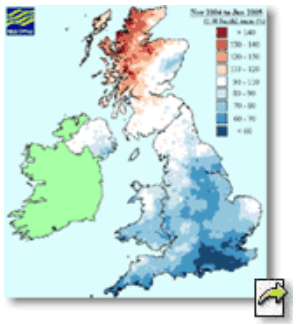
8 July 2005

Concerns for water resource levels across some parts of the UK will heighten over the coming days, as the UK sees a return to very warm, mainly dry and often sunny weather through this weekend and early next week.

This further period without any significant rain, extends the dry spell for southern areas of England into its ninth month. Early indications are, however, that, later next week, more unsettled conditions may spread across many southern areas.

The driest county has been Essex with 251 mm of rain from the beginning of November 2004 to the end of June 2005. Surrey and Sussex have the largest anomaly, with only 58% of their normal rainfall during the same 8-month period — the driest since 1975/76.

More about the dry spell



Drought and high temperatures across much of Europe are also causing concern, as parts of the continent are now facing the worst drought in 60 years. Western Europe has been most affected by the extended dry spell, with Spain receiving less than 50% of its average rainfall in the last few months. Widespread crop failure has been reported in Portugal, while water and energy restrictions have been imposed in Italy and France.

Latest forecast for the UK

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